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Vertical Mixing of CO₂ and CH₄ with Gravity Effects

Pruess, K., C.M. Oldenburg, G.J. Moridis, and S.W. Webb

Earth Sciences Division
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
University of California
Berkeley CA 94720, USA

Sandia National Labs
Environmental Technology Dept.
Sandia National Laboratories
P.O. Box 5800, MS 0719
Albuquerque, NM 87185-0719
Tel: +1-505-844-3931; Fax: +1-505-844-0543; E-mail: swwebb@sandia.gov

Numerical simulations of mixing of carbon dioxide (CO₂) and methane (CH₄) in a gravitationally stable configuration have been carried out using the multicomponent flow and transport simulator TOUGH2. The configuration is relevant to carbon sequestration in depleted natural gas reservoirs, where injected CO₂ will migrate quickly to low levels of the reservoir by buoyancy flow due to its large density. Once a gravitationally stable configuration is attained, mixing will continue on a longer time scale by molecular diffusion. However, diffusive mixing of real gas components CO₂ and CH₄ can give rise to pressure gradients that can induce pressurization and flow that may affect the mixing process. Understanding this coupled response of diffusion and flow to concentration gradients is important for the prediction of mixing times in stratified gas reservoirs used for carbon sequestration. We have implemented the Dusty Gas Model (DGM) as an alternative to the standard Advective Diffusive Model (ADM) in our multiphase flow simulator TOUGH2. A new equation of state module (EOS7C) that handles water, brine, CO₂, gas tracer, and CH₄ was developed in which gas properties for mixtures in the system water, CO₂, and CH₄ are calculated using the Peng-Robinson real gas mixture model. Comparisons of vertical mixing results for low permeability and high permeability systems using the DGM and ADM will be presented.

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